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IMPORTANCE OF MANY NON-POLITICAL MATTERS.

ALL Europe once rang with the renown of the battles of Fontenoy, of Marsaglia, and Almanza; was stunned with rumours of the restless intrigues of Louis le Grand, Cardinal Alberoni, Maria Theresa, and Frederick II. of Prussia. What endless cogitations, apprehensions, and conjectures, were abroad, on the progress and issue of the negotiations at Utrecht, Erfurth, and Aix-la-Chapelle! Of all these seven days' wonders and surmises of our great-grandmothers and grandfathers, what are now the abiding substance and impression? They occupy a dull chapter of history, and that is all. They had no intrinsic bearing on the real interests of contemporaries, nor on those of a preceding or subsequent generation. They filled the earth with disturbance and empty noise—nothing more; and were of infinitely less enduring import than Christopher Columbus's discovery of a little sea-weed floating on the bosom of the great Atlantic, or the note which another genius took of the constant flutter of the magnetic needle towards one quarter of the heavens.

Apart from the discoveries of geography and science, of the deep importance of which all at this day are convinced, there is another description of matters, in common language termed, and usually considered, small, though in their tendency great and of vital interest, and which it falls more particularly within our purpose to elucidate. We allude to the constant changes, adoptions, and vicissitudes in the fashions, manners, habits, costume, and usages of private life. These are mostly deemed by the higher powers so insignificant as to be unworthy of magisterial or legislative cognisance; and only proper subjects of regulation for the coteries of Almack's, or Beau Nash, Beau Brummel, and Romeo Coates. Yet, with all due submission, they are in reality deeply interesting to the well-being of the community, have a very material influence on its enjoyments, and are really, many of them, of more social importance than orders in council, royal proclamations, or even acts of Parliament; and might be, if placed under the arbitration of taste and intelligence, rendered subservient to higher moral and cosmopolitan purposes.

An example of a revolution in small things, and its effects, drawn almost from the nursery, will illustrate this position.

It is well known that, not a very great many years ago, the usages of domestic as well as civil life were very despotic. The heads of families, and the heads of schools, as well as the heads of the church and the nation, were all so many Grand Turks in their respective domains, and dispensed their nods and rods, ferulas and edicts, like so many tyrant sceptres, with absolute sway. In those iron times, for rugged, iron, and sour they were, boys and girls were not permitted the license they now indulge in; they were not allowed to romp and roll about, and chatter and play before their superiors; little misses, and even great ones, were compelled to sit still and silent, with their hands clasped, in the maternal presence; and the boys were no better off, not being allowed to speak, or perhaps sit down, or stand covered, before their natural guardian. The servants came in for a due share of this severe and gloomy despotism; they demeaned themselves like spaniels, and in return incurred the discipline now restricted to the canine species; and if they complained to the neighbouring sessions of a broken head, facial or other disfigurement, what magistrate would interfere in a dispute between a gentleman and his domestics? As a consequence, and indeed necessary to support this *home-slavery*, a sharp coercive system

was of course kept up through all ranks and degrees of society. Flagellation, caning, slapping, horsewhipping, cudgelling, and kicking, were constantly, as now in China and Russia, going on and being administered, from morn till night, by mothers, fathers, masters, and tutors. The woes unnumbered that followed, the heart-ache, restraint, and anguish endured, the fears and apprehensions created, the harsh and bad passions fostered, and the degrading examples offered to all, it would require a volume as large as Baker's Chronicle fully to depict and enumerate.

Happily this is now only matter of history. A sweeter tone of feeling has flowed through all ranks; and the hardships suffered, and the unrecorded tyranny, often with good but mistaken motives, perpetrated in private life and menial service, have yielded to kindlier feelings and superior intelligence. Parents are less reserved, formal, and stern before their children, who may now sit or stand as they list, and prattle almost as long as they please, often as much to the senior's as to their own amusement. No servant can with impunity be degraded by personal chastisement, or suffer other wrong, without having his complaint as promptly listened to, and as thoroughly redressed, as if it came from his employer. Liberty and security have been extended to all; and so long as it is a liberty compatible with order and subordination (without which there can be no liberty for any body), human enjoyment must be considered as incalculably augmented. This is, in truth, one of the most gratifying triumphs of civilization; it has yielded a common benefit—emancipated and protected juveniles as well as adults, operatives and menials as well as their masters and mistresses.

Let us pass to another sort of meliorations in a small way, very beneficial and comfortable in their results, referring to changes of COSTUME. The time is still almost within recollection when ladies peered over their fans and stomachers from a circumvalation of hooped petticoat, with highly rouged faces, their heads powdered, pomatumed, curled, and surmounted with awful wire-caps, towering like Babels into the sky; and when the gentlemen, to match, were caparisoned with a tie, pig-tail, or bob-peruke, over which was a cocked, three-cornered, or huge Kevenhuller hat of George III., with sword, long ruffs protruding at the wrists, capacious waistcoat, ornamented by a garniture of pucker'd linen collected in snowy wreaths at every yaw or stretch (braces were unknown) round the large hanging flap pockets, into which the established national symbol is usually represented with both hands thrust; boots, with cream-coloured tops, or pumps, with large silver buckles over the toes, and leather inexpressibles, fresh piped clayed, buttoned, and tied or buckled at the knees tight as a rivet. Only think of any natural use, purpose, or convenience, of such an external presentment of either sex! What facilities could the outer adornments of lady or gentleman offer for repose, motion, converse, or communication? The famous "Vindication of Natural Society," written by Burke soon after his advent from the sister isle, is now acknowledged to have been a piece of irony, and a very perfect one it is; but yet it seems as if it might have very properly been meant in downright earnest, when we consider the monstrosities which it appears to hold up to ridicule. Could this eminent man have foreseen the present time—could he have witnessed by anticipation the transition which has taken place from the Hottentot bedizings and constrained forms of his own age to the genuine complexions, pearly rows, and starlit countenances of ours—had he seen the gossamer drapery, the neat chapeau (for on this point the ladies have

lately become a little utilitarian, impelled no doubt by ferocious March winds), and sylph-like creations, free, easy, and *degaçé*, flying, skipping, gliding, or moving like Eve in Paradise—

Grace in all her steps, heaven in her eye,
In every gesture dignity and love—

had the great statesman, we repeat, been cognisant of this vicissitude, he would certainly have written a serious protest against the toilette of 1770, and tried to urge on the happier state of things which we now see around us. He would have then admitted that even in the contrivance of attire there is more than is often dreamt of in our philosophy; that the setting of the fashion of a bonnet, affixing the protuberance of a skirt, or the fit of a shoe, has often more to do with sublunar enjoyment than the framing of a turnpike bill, excise or customs act, inasmuch as the latter is local or limited, while the former is almost universal, affects all, paining or pleasing, pinching, pressing, refreshing, or distressing, like the air we breathe, every body in every place, at all conscious times of our vital existence.

Some of the amusements of the past were as revolting to modern perceptions as personal furniture and appliances. Only to revert to dramatic representations. These at first—that is, so far back as we have any notice of them—formed an extempore buffoonery exhibited by strolling performers in any place of public resort, consisting of the antics, gambols, and grimaces that are now treasured up by clown and pantaloons, and form the staple of the pantomimes annually presented to the juveniles during the Christmas holidays. The transition from these to the next improvement, was truly a step from the ludicrous to the sublime—from broad farce and burlesque to the *Sacred Mysteries* in which our ancestors were sought to be edified by representations of the Creation, the Day of Judgment, or other scriptural subjects; Adam and Eve, the patriarchs, prophets, and apostles, being frequently brought on the stage, personated by the united company of parish clerks, or other incorporated fraternity. Accustomed to the splendid scenic representations of the Romish churches, it was thought no profanation for the people so to amuse themselves. Accordingly, a play was considered only an after-piece of religious duties, and was frequently acted in churchyards, or even in cathedrals, as the Boy-Bishop was in London. The custom is not obsolete on the Continent. In some of the provincial towns of France, theatrical pieces continue to be got up, founded on striking incidents in the biblical writings; and young students of theology may be seen preparing themselves for their priestly duties by dramatic rehearsals, in the open air, of the mass and other ceremonies of the popish ritual.

What a vicissitude do these slight advertences present in usages and endurance! Our forefathers would congregate at Clerkenwell daily for a week, to see minutely carried through its different stages the entire history of Joseph and his brethren; their less patient descendants are apt to consider a three or four hours' sitting an infliction, to witness the most vivid dramatic representations. Life has obviously not only been lengthened by refinement, but become infinitely more concentrated in substance. We not only live longer, but experience a wonderfully accelerated dispatch of sensation. If a phial of modern luxury contains, as Burke represented, the essence of a hogshead of the coarse enjoyments of the feudal age, we may certainly affirm, that in one day of ordinary existence, by the resources and abbreviations afforded by science, arts, and literature, by the diversity of occupations and amusements, by the ease and

multiplicity of social connexions and intercourse, and, more than all, by the rapidity of locomotive flights, are comprised the diversions that would have formerly occupied a twelvemonth. The subject-matter, too, of our employments, partakes more of realities and less of the ideal, abstract, or fanciful. Spectral illusions, goblin stories, apprehensions of sorcery, and the other offspring of a diseased or untutored mind, by which men were wont to be distressed and bewildered, have ceased to be matters of cognisance or sober thought. Food, fire, and raiment, the conveniences and luxuries of living, and the means by which these may be obtained in the greatest fullness and perfection, form, with rare exceptions, the engrossing aim of all classes. The fancies we do cherish are mainly such as tend to augment, not to embitter, enjoyment. Unlike the savage or half-civilised state, gloom and terror are not deliberately cultivated; they are not patronised as part of the indispensable requirements of the established order and worship. Tragedy, dirges, monodies, and epitaphs, have become less in request, and the unavoidable ills of life are sought to be beguiled or averted more by comedy, music, or the opera, than by the perpetration of dark and melancholy rites.

Dramatic representations themselves are a proof of this tendency of the public mind towards intrinsic utilities. They have declined, we apprehend, not so much from late dinners and large theatres, as from an absolute change in the popular taste. A whole evening's leisure, with the further deductions of a heated and unwholesome atmosphere, a protracted and perhaps irksome sitting, make up a price too high to be frequently paid by a rational person for an exaggerated portraiture of the emotions and actions either of real or imaginary personages. The consequence is, that the drama has fallen into a position strikingly inferior to that which it occupied during the eighteenth century. The same revolution has happened in France. Theatrical property has declined in value, and the disciples of Thespis no longer receive those inordinate salaries which enabled them to rival princes and farmers-general in the splendour of their establishments. Since the period of the Empire, not an actor or actress of the French theatres has been in a condition, from professional gain, to set up an equipage.

Amidst these social vicissitudes in the minutiae of life, it is gratifying to think that the standard of moral feeling has been indubitably elevated. This is unquestionably the case in the British metropolis, where, in the opinion of the elder residents, there is a decided improvement in manners and behaviour. The public tea-gardens, the minor assemblies and concerts in taverns, exhibit none of those licentious scenes which abounded in their ancient prototypes, Ranelagh, Bagneux Wells, and Vauxhall. To the credit of young men of the present day, they have little appetite for absolute grossness, and this improvement must certainly be ascribed to the diffusion of knowledge, and more general cultivation of the productions of art and literature. The periodical press, with few exceptions, is free from impurity, contains none of the factitious allurements to vice which disgraced a former period—no *bon ton* magazines, nor trash of that description, to corrupt the minds of the rising generation. In the language of society and external presentation of vice, the purification that has arisen over what prevailed at the beginning of the reign of George III., has been often remarked: the dialogue in the comedies of Congreve, Vanbrugh, and Cibber, would be revolting to modern ears; and few living examples could be found of the grossness in expression and conduct recorded in the scandalous chronicle of Lord Orford's *Reminiscences*. The scenes in the *Adventures of a Guinea*, though highly coloured by Johnstone, are considered not to exhibit a very exaggerated picture of living manners for the time for which they were written; but in the public men of the present day, or in private individuals, it would be difficult to find any corresponding examples of turpitude and profligacy. If not in sentiment more pure than our grandfathers, yet in practice, such is the taste of the age, as Sir Walter Scott remarked, that "modern vice pays a tax to appearance, and is compelled to wear a mask of decorum."*

It is almost supererogatory to say any thing by way of wind-up to these rambling observations on matters of apparently small concernment. It is clear that happiness in "that condition of life in which it has

pleased God to call us," depends in a very inferior degree on what are usually called "great matters"—"things of vast importance" in a national point of view. Many of these supposed great matters are only things causing at the time an inordinate absorption of mind and a corresponding measure of talk, and too frequently distract attention from what should constitute the real mental and social enjoyments which we ought to aim at. But it is fortunate, as already hinted at, that, after all, the talk usually expended on great matters has less actual influence on our social condition than the silent, unobtrusive, newspaper-unnoticed little matters which daily affect our most ordinary thoughts and actions. These small affairs form a kind of fly-wheel on the mechanism of society, keeping the fabric of wheels within wheels working smoothly and steadily, and so preventing it from dashing off at the gallop on every occasion of undue excitement and impetus. Besides, it must not be imagined that matters are unimportant in their character and results, merely because they do not come with a mighty fuss and bounces upon the world, like some political or diplomatic explosion. Circumstances utterly obscure and unthought-of are in daily operation—need we instance the slow and sure steps of the educator—which in fifty years hence will have an infinitely greater influence over human affairs than the whole of the paltry-great squabbles—string them all together—which now exteriorly engage public attention.

THE WARNING.

DURING the early part of summer, a mortal fever had been raging in the populous village of Overburn, from which the scene of our little story was not distant more than a mile. Of those who were attacked, some had recovered, but by far the greater part had died; and, as is common enough in all cases of the kind, a degree of alarm and consternation prevailed for several miles round. Among those in the town, as it was called, who had gone to their long homes—their last silent resting-place in the churchyard—many were connected one way or other in the country; and thus minute and detailed accounts of almost every death were circulated among the families of cottagers, farm-servants, and rural labourers, to a considerable distance. The fever, and those victims who day after day fell before it, formed the prevailing topics of conversation, till people had talked themselves into a degree of imaginary terror, and worked their minds into that state of excitement which made them willing to listen to the most incredible and marvellous accounts, while they were, at the same time, willing to trace to the most extraordinary origin the very simplest occurrences.

History as well as observation has established the fact, that there is in the mind of man, when left untutored, or even in a partially enlightened state, a strong predisposition to believe in supernatural agency; and, in the present instance, this principle soon began to manifest itself. The excited imaginations of the poor people whose relatives were bidding adieu to this world, converted every noise which they heard—even a bat flapping its wing against the window, or the night wind sighing among the chimney-tops—into a warning of the solemn event about to take place, communicated by some invisible power. Their minds brooded over these mysterious indications of death, which in most instances were fatally verified. They became the subject of conversation in the sick-room, depressing the spirits of the patient, and thus hurrying him on to his doom, if they did not of themselves produce the very event of which they were believed to be only portents; they formed the theme of superstitious wonder and melancholy speculation among the friends of the deceased, after death had apparently sealed their truth; and from thence they travelled to their acquaintances in the country, with all their details exaggerated and exhibited through a magnifying and not unfrequently a false medium.

It was the very pride of the year, being the month of July, and hay-making had commenced. Scarce a breath of wind was felt—the sun shone with unclouded splendour—the blooming clover, from which the bee was busy extracting its "nectar store," sent forth the richest perfume, and the calm and sultry air seemed alive with the song of birds and the ceaseless hum of insects. As already said, the hay-makers had gone forth to their task in the field—the men with oft-repeated sweep of the keen-edged scythe to sever the crop from the ground, and a troop of sun-burnt girls, and other individuals of the softer sex, to tie it up in sheaves and prepare it for being carried to the farm. Such a season and such a combination of the sexes, notwithstanding the oppressive heat, and the severity of the labour which calls them abroad, has been characterised by mirth and rural enjoyment from time immemorial. Ancient poets have sung of hay-making; the benevolent heart still warms over their descriptions of rustic happiness during this joyous season; and, sooth to say, there are not wanting realities which correspond to their glowing pictures. But, on the present occasion, there was an air of sadness mingled with the mirth of the hay-makers at Minnowbriggs: their laughter was more fitful and less loud than it used to be; the jests were of a sub-

dued order; and altogether a feeling of apprehension—a something ominous—seemed to sit heavy on the hearts of both lad and lass, as often as silence gave them time for reflection. Instances of the fever having penetrated from the town into the country, had of late become more common; and John Jarves and his wife, both of whom should have been among the band, now lay dangerously ill of that fearful disorder.

On the day in question, the mowers were reduced to two, the others having been called off to do something else about the farm; and these, in returning from their breakfast, with the bottles of small beer which were to serve for their forenoon's refreshment in their hands, called at the cottage to inquire for their sick fellow-labourers. Fortunately, upon this occasion the accounts were cheering. The medical attendant, who had just left the house, had pronounced the disease past its height, and said that he now confidently expected a favourable issue. As a confirmation of this opinion, at the time when the mowers called, both patients were enjoying a peaceful slumber, from which the doctor had forbidden them to be awakened. Gladdened by the happy change, the workmen took their way around by the end of the house to the field in which they were to be employed, and, after a short consultation, exactly opposite to a back window, they commenced the labours of the forenoon.

Towards eleven o'clock, both patients awoke, apparently much refreshed by the sleep which they had enjoyed, and, as it seemed, in a fair way of recovery. But by this time a number of neighbours and gossips, from the surrounding cottages, had assembled in the house, some overjoyed at the prospect of their restoration to health, and others, strange as it may seem, secretly but not the less certainly discontented at the event not having answered exactly to their previous predictions—thus leaving room for cavillers to question the truth of their pretensions to a knowledge of futurity.

"I aye thought they might recover as lang as the warning waas ga'en," said Margaret Toshick, an old woman who belonged to the last-mentioned class of visitors; "and we have a' great reason to be thankfu' for their betterness. But for a' that, and though the doctor has said that they are sure to recover, folk should never be owe certain; for the doctor sees as short gait afore him as his neighbours, and the fever may soon relap, and the warning may be sent, and them that rejoice may soon have cause to mourn."

While the last word was yet on her lips, a short, sharp sound was heard, which, to the terrified group, appeared to come from under the bed, and which, in their estimation, resembled the report of a pistol. The loudest peal of thunder that ever was heard by mortal ears, would have failed to produce half the effect upon their imaginations which was produced by that momentary noise. All stood silent for a few seconds, while their trembling limbs, quivering lips, and suppressed breathing, gave unquestionable proof of that indescribable state of feeling for which *fear* is not a proper name—that mixture of awe, terror, and mystery, which does not find a ready utterance in words.

"What's that!" at last whispered one of the company, in a voice so low, and so choked with apprehension, as to be scarcely audible.

"Ay, ye may weel speer what's that?" rejoined Margaret Toshick, who, notwithstanding the state of her own feelings, seemed to have been waiting for some such question. "That's the warning," she continued; "nae doubt about it ava noo! and either the ane or the ither—John or Jennet—maun e'en awa' to the lonesome kirkyard, as I said there was owe muckle reason to fear they would do when they took the disorder. The doctor may say what he likes about bein' *cold-aceant*, but, when it comes to a guid, we maun a' say, The Lord's will be done; and what is fooreordained to be, will be in spite o' a' his palavers, and his learned faces, and his drags, and his doctery. Peggy there, puir thing, did a' his newfangled ways, and keepit the doors and the windows open, as he bade her, though that was never wont to be done in my day, and the folk had just as muckle skill then as they ha'e yet. But mark the upshot. At the very time when he thinks he has gained a victory, and may be, at the very minute when he is braggin' of his performance to some ither body, there's Ane aboonblest be his name—wha laughs at his vainglory, and sends the warning for anither world; and weel for them for wham it was sent, if they're only prepared."

In the state of feeling which then existed, Margaret's reasoning was conclusive. No one attempted to answer her, and no one appeared to doubt the truth of what she had said. But though they had been determined to do both, time was not allowed; for she had scarcely been silent two seconds, when they were again alarmed by a repetition of the self-same noise, or at least a noise so like the first, that no one could distinguish between them; only to their terrified imaginations it seemed doubly loud. A short period of awe-struck silence followed, during which even Margaret appeared to have nothing to say.

The girl who acted as sick-nurse, and who had all along taken a deep interest in the fate of the patients, was the first to speak. "That crack came from the back window," said she; "and I could wager somebody has flung a stane at it, or something else, to make the noise." While she thus spoke, there was a degree of tremor in her voice, which showed that she

* Miscellaneous Press Works, vol. iii. p. 516.

scarcely believed what she herself had asserted. From her attention having been steadily devoted to the sufferers, she had seen, in their saddened looks and stifled moans, an evidence of the unfavourable effect which the former warning and the conversation which followed, had produced upon them; and, with more sense than the rest, she now wished to save them from an increase of those feelings of dismay which she saw they could not long endure. Her efforts, however, were rendered fruitless by the more orthodox Margaret Toshick, who had never before been put down upon any occasion of the kind.

"Na, na, Peggy, my woman," said she; "there has been naething at the window but an unseen hand wi' the warning o' death! Howsomever, to satisfy you, I shall gang and see." She accordingly went round to the back of the house, and returned, in little more than a minute, with, "It's just as I said; no aye within cry, except the twa hay-cutters, and they're baith owe the knowe, and out o' sight. Fools may put the evil day afar off; but death will come at the appointed time for a' that; and it's a braw thing to be prepared for the coming of the great enemy."

Notwithstanding the positive evidence which Margaret had brought to bear upon the subject, Peggy was not yet fully satisfied; and, at her suggestion, the house was searched to see if any thing could be found within its walls, which, by any possibility, could have produced the noises in question. But nothing could be discovered which had the slightest chance of emitting even a minimum of sound; and at last the poor girl herself was forced to hang down her head in dismay, and acknowledge that there had been something beyond the ordinary laws of nature in what they had heard.

This state of affairs was the most favourable that could have been imagined for Margaret again to take up her testimony. "Ay, ay," she resumed, "it's just as I thought, after a'; the first warning for John, honest man—I aye said he was fairest game—and the second for Jennet; and noo baith maun awa' to their lang hames, for there's nae remit [remission] o' that sentence. Howsomever, things are a' mixed wi' mercy, and they've had a blessed time to prepare for death. But see, Peggy," she added, once more addressing the young woman who acted as sick nurse, and, lowering her voice, which hitherto had been loud and sonorous, to a whisper, "look at John's face; I'm far deceived if there's no alteration there. And, as I tell'd ye before, in spite o' a' the doctor's palavers about *coercion*, I muckle doubt the last enemy has begun to deal wi' him noo!"

For some time past the party had been too deeply engaged in thinking over the mysterious occurrences already noticed, and in listening to Margaret discussing the merits of the question at issue, to pay much attention to the sufferers. The last observation, however, had an instantaneous effect in altering the current of their thoughts; and, on turning once more to the sick-beds, the fixed and glazing eye of the poor man, the hands which tugged with feeble effort at the bedclothes, or tried to grasp imaginary objects in the air, and his thick and convulsed breathing, told, in a language not to be mistaken, that he was in the last agonies of nature. His strength had been completely exhausted before the fever abated; and though it had left him, in the estimation of his medical attendant, with a fair prospect of recovery, when the appalling sound fell upon his ear, together with the ominous observations afterwards made upon it—thus fixing, as it were, the certainty of his fate—the deadly impression had sunk so heavily upon his heart, that worn-out nature could no longer sustain the weight, and the feeble spark of life was on the verge of being extinguished.

In a few minutes more, he died; and his wife, unconscious of what had happened, appeared to be fast following him to "that bourne from whence no traveller returns." But almost at the same moment, one of the mowers, who had no means of knowing how matters stood within, called at the door to ask for "a drink of water" for himself and his fellow-labourer. He said farther, "that they had deposited two bottles of beer, which were intended for their forenoon's refreshment, behind the house, thinking that they would be out of the sun; but from the extraordinary heat of the day, as he supposed, both had thrown the corks, and both were almost empty, so that they had nothing left wherewith to quench their thirst save water."

As fortune would have it, these words were addressed to the very individual who had formerly been so anxious to discover a natural cause for the ominous sounds. With the word *bottle*, an idea had dawned upon her mind that this circumstance might perhaps lead to a solution of the mysterious question, more in accordance with her own opinions than any thing she had heard from Margaret Toshick; and she was careful to suppress, as far as possible, her own agitation, and, at the same time, not to interrupt the man till he had reached the end of his story. Having made herself fully acquainted with the particulars of the case, and supplied him with a quantity of water, the whole of which was the work of little more than a minute, she hastened back to the chamber of death, where she found the poor woman, who was still ignorant of her husband's decease, just beginning to recover from a state of temporary insensibility; and, though the lifeless remains of a fellow-creature lay untouched upon the other bed, there was a something of triumph in

her air as she addressed the dame who hitherto had been the principal speaker.

"Margaret," said she, "your warnings, after a', have been naething mair than twa bottles of ale casting the corks at the window!"

The sound of her voice, as she uttered these words, seemed to give an immediate relief to the remaining sufferer, who once more opened her eyes and looked around the bed, while she also began to breathe more freely. Margaret, however, was mustering breath for a defence, and, to the heart of the sick woman, there can be little doubt that she would have renewed all the terror of the warnings; but, fortunately, before she could speak, the doctor entered. Having overheard Peggy's last words, and guessing to a certain extent what had happened, he immediately ordered the whole party, except the nurse, to quit the sick-room. As he concluded, Margaret, ever willing to show the superiority of her understanding, raised her hand, and pointing to the bed on which lay the body of the deceased, she was beginning to remonstrate upon the folly of giving such orders at such a time. Had she been allowed to proceed, it was evident that she intended to say something about the necessity of having "the corpse dressed"; but before she could finish the second word of her harangue, he checked her by raising his hand to her face, and addressing her in a stern whisper.

"Recollect," said he, "the *two pounds* which you owe me ever since I cured your husband of a dangerous illness. You must either pay the sum immediately, or do as I bid you, and so escape incarceration for debt." Margaret knew not what *incarceration* meant; she had never heard the word before, but she felt that it must be something terrible. She was not at the time able to pay the money, and she had, moreover, no intention of ever doing so, unless forced to it; and thus she was the very first to leave the apartment, and in a few minutes after she left the house, in which she considered she had been grossly insulted.

The doctor's next business was to draw Peggy aside, and to learn from her, as minutely as time would permit, the import of what had passed since his last visit. A few words sufficed to make him understand the whole affair; and he saw at once, that, to give the poor woman the slightest chance of recovery, her mind must be kept perfectly tranquil. A short slumber into which, from the exhaustion occasioned by previous excitement, she almost immediately fell, favoured his benevolent purpose; and, while it lasted, he promptly arranged measures for having the corpse quietly removed to the other end of the house. By a humane deception, the death of the husband was concealed from the wife for nearly a week; she was even led to believe that he had only been removed to another apartment for fresher air, and that there was still a chance of his recovery; and it was not till she was considered able to bear the shock, that she was gradually made acquainted with her widowed condition. With the advantages of quiet, kind, and careful treatment, she ultimately recovered; and though she felt deeply the effect of the *warning* in the death of her husband, she was forced to acknowledge, that there was mercy in the dispensation which spared her to watch over, and in some measure provide for, the wants of a young family.

There was something so ludicrous in the idea of the springing of a bottle of small beer being mistaken for a warning of death, that when the story got into circulation, people could scarcely refrain from laughing at it; and they did laugh outright at the lugubrious observations of Margaret Toshick. The medical men of the district, too, who had all along laboured to disown a belief in supernatural warnings, laid hold of the opportunity thus afforded for bringing the whole into ridicule. They narrated the circumstances to the friends of their patients, and to the patients themselves, assuring them, that if the whole of those warnings, which had produced so much terror and alarm, had been rightly investigated, it would have been found that they proceeded from causes in themselves as little terrible as "a bottle of ale casting the cork!" And whether it were the natural consequence of the new state of feeling thus produced, or that the disease had already exhausted its virulence, we know not, but the fever almost immediately became less mortal in the populous village of Overburn, and soon after, it entirely disappeared.

From the foregoing little story, the evil effects of some particular kinds of superstition must be evident to the reader; and yet it would appear that superstition in some shape or other is almost inseparable from humanity in certain stages of society. Among an ignorant or only half-enlightened people, things must be accounted for, as well as among philosophers; and as they have not those powers of investigation which would enable them to arrive at truth, they immediately fall back upon supernatural agency. Superstitions no doubt have been, and always will be, modified by the peculiar temperament of the people among whom they exist, by their civil institutions, and their notions of the Deity. The manner in which their worship is conducted, too—whether in a joyous, solemn, austere, or gloomy style—must have a considerable influence in moulding the creations of fancy; but till something like rational knowledge begins to prevail, and till effects have been traced to their causes, and the connexion between them established upon incontrovertible evidence, the great mass of mankind will always

account for much which might be easily accounted for upon other principles, by attributing it to supernatural agency. Even at the present day, those who are not minutely acquainted with the humbler ranks of society, would scarcely believe to what an extent superstitious notions prevail among them. In some parts of the country, and by some individuals in almost all parts of it, every trifling dream is still noticed; and, however incongruous or absurd may have been the scenes which it represented, some terrible or at least some important event is expected to follow. It were endless to attempt even an enumeration of the different modes of interpreting these illusions of the night. With the exception of those sybils who pretend to have studied the art, every one adopts an interpretation of his own; these interpretations are always influenced by circumstances, and by the whims and caprices of the individual; but one result uniformly follows. If within a month, or, if the dream has been a remarkable one, within a year from the time at which it occurred, any thing should happen into the most distant resemblance of which it can by any possibility be tortured, then it is remembered and set down as another incontestable evidence that "dreams are not sent for nought." But if nothing at all extraordinary occurs within a limited time, then the dream, and all the terror and alarm which it occasioned, are forgotten; and thus evidence is constantly accumulated on the one side, while on the other no care is taken to preserve a single circumstance which might tend to invalidate it. By these means, a belief in dreams, spells, omens, and warnings, has been long kept alive, embittering, with unnecessary apprehensions and idle fears, any little happiness which mortals may enjoy. We may hope, however, that the time is not now very far distant when knowledge will chase these remaining phantoms of the darker ages from our moral hemisphere, and warnings, and other imaginary causes of terror, cease to be among the evils with which humanity has to contend.

POPULAR INFORMATION ON COMMERCIAL ECONOMY.

PATENTS.

It seems, at first sight, quite fair and reasonable, that, to the inventor of any machine calculated to be useful to society, or the author of any pattern or design agreeable to the public taste, or the discoverer of any natural principle likely to benefit mankind extensively, an exclusive privilege of making and dealing in the results of his ingenuity should be extended by way of reward, and that this privilege should exist for a considerable time, and receive all necessary protection from the laws. Accordingly, the granting and enforcing of such exclusive privileges, or patents, form part of the policy of most civilised states.

There is, nevertheless, much reason to apprehend that this is not the best, though it may at present be the most expedient, mode of rewarding the patience and ingenuity of such men. It is a plain objectionable both in principle and with a regard to its workings. It is even attended with much danger and anxiety to the very persons who are supposed to benefit by it. In our own country, the usages respecting patents are peculiarly obnoxious to blame. Contrived by men who have known little either of manufacturing industry or the principles of political economy, they are calculated to create enormous expense and trouble to the patentees, and greatly to hamper mechanical invention. As the law stands, a patent, when obtained, lasts for fourteen years; and towards its expiration, it may be prolonged for a further period of seven years, thus granting a monopoly for twenty-one years. No patent is granted for the entire United Kingdom; the clumsy expedient must be adopted of procuring a patent in England, Scotland, and Ireland individually, if required for all three. The estimated expense of a patent for the three kingdoms, is £350. The patent right, however, by a singular anomaly, "is held to be open to infringement, or no right at all, until after it has been confirmed by the verdict of a court of law. So that for a first infringement, damages, nominal, not real, are invariably given, and thus, to the expense of a patent, there is added a large amount in law costs, besides a loss of time and labour wholly incalculable."

It is not unusual to incur an expense of £1500 in defending a patent right; and, in short, the whole process is such as to convey an impression that it is only part of a scheme to promote litigation, and enrich legal practitioners at the expense of the public. Such, however, is not the real state of the case; the mischief is traceable in the first instance to the absurd principle of granting patents on any terms, and in the second to the great error of leaving them to be granted by an officer of the crown, whose education and habits altogether unfit him for judging of the merits of complex mechanical and chemical discoveries. If patents are to be granted, they should be issued by a small board of competent commissioners, and for the whole empire, at a reasonable and definite expense.

It will considerably facilitate our inquiry into the rationale of patent privileges, if we define what is the precise nature of an invention. Practically, there are two kinds of inventions—the first consists of the designing or planning of an object in that style of taste

* The Fine Arts in England, by Edward Edwards. 1849.

which it is unlikely any one else would fall upon ; the second is the contrivance of an object or piece of mechanism, or the discovery of a principle, which it is probable another person might soon become acquainted with in the course of study. It is evident that there is a material difference between these varieties of invention. To the man who drew an elegant pattern, and employed it in any branch of manufacture, we should by no means refuse the unexpensive reward conferred by an exclusive privilege, license, or patent, for a limited period. His drawing or pattern is a kind of creation, analogous to that of literary composition, and equally requires a short protection ; but on the same grounds that we object to a lengthened copyright for books, we would oppose a protracted copyright for patterns. Both the pattern-drawer and the author have been less or more indebted to the floating and free designs and works of past ages ; their minds and tastes have been animated and cultivated by a perusal of those refined productions ; and as they have got, so must they give. It may seem odd to say so, but it is clear to us that every man's mind is but a portion of the general mind, and cannot be nicely individualised. We are all largely indebted to the minds which have gone before us, and left their experience for our guidance ; and we are not less indebted to the minds of contemporaries. We but think as we see and have been taught. The accumulated thoughts of a hundred generations passed into the tomb, form an inheritance of which we have reason to be justly proud, because the inheritance is free—all may enjoy it, and benefit by it. Can we for a moment contemplate the possibility of each generation churlishly locking up its thoughts and experience, or engrossing them in copyright, and retailing them pinching and meanly, at an exorbitant price, to all future generations ? The bare idea of such a thing appears like a libel on humanity ; yet it is of the nature of all arguments for patent privileges, protracted copyrights, and monopolies. Those who advocate such restrictions in their most offensive forms, would seem to proceed on the assumption that each mind is its own creator, and owes nothing to others. "What ! exclaims the conceited pleader for perpetual monopoly, "was such a genius as Byron's indebted to previous free literature—were his ideas not original ?" We answer, decidedly, that Byron was as much indebted as any other writer to the accessible mine of thought handed down from a previous age of the world. His "Childe Harold" is full of allusions to ancient literature ; and in some others of his productions we find many sentiments and images borrowed from Scripture. Had the original works been sparingly diffused at a monopoly price, it is not likely that they would have been generally accessible, and might therefore have escaped his lordship's attention. In the same manner, if all the productions of poets, historians, divines, novelists, and dramatic writers, had been locked up in stringent copyright, and doled out by heirs at exorbitant rates, if doled out at all, would not modern literature have been of the most feeble kind, or so effectually stunted in growth as to have scarcely existed for any useful purpose ? We often feel how much cause we have to rejoice that our country possesses a treasure in its national melodies, free as the air we breathe, and of which no calamity can rob us. The use and enjoyment of these delightful airs form a species of birthright. They are sung and played by one generation, which hands them down unimpaired to its successor, and that again carries them down to the next. The minds who contrived these beautiful pieces, and scattered them abroad for the enjoyment of their fellow-creatures, would have spurned with disdain the notion of a monopolising copyright ; but modern musicians possess no such liberal sentiments, and we find the public playing of new airs, or the singing of new songs, the subject of scrupulous legislation and patent privilege.*

We now come to consider useful inventions in the arts, and discoveries of scientific principles. In judging of the precise claims of patentees, it is proper to remember, that their inventions and discoveries are merely new adaptations of existing materials or principles, which adaptations are almost always a result of a prevalent condition of things. There can be no claim of creation, but only of finding out what has all along existed in the great laboratory of nature. Such is the progressive advance of mind, and of social wants, that there seems to be a time when any given discovery must necessarily be made. Fifty years ago, there was a demand for a greatly improved adaptation of steam-power, and such improvement was at length made by Watt. At present, steam-power is found to be clumsy and expensive, and a hundred men's wits are at work to strike out a

motive force from galvanism. Paper manufacturers have for some time been subjected to a great loss, by the floating away of material in the process of washing and grinding their rags. What is the consequence ? Different makers, unknown to each other, have contrived a simple apparatus which effectually prevents all loss—a common necessity leading to a common result. On a late occasion, while visiting a paper-mill, we were shown another improvement, also prompted by the urgency of the case. It was a plan for hardening the paper with size, by causing the web to pass over a wet beam ; the old method having consisted of dipping sheets into a tub by the hand. This useful improvement was made by two paper-makers, one in England and the other in Scotland, but both at the same time, and quite unaware of each other's proceedings. The Englishman had got a patent, but the Scotchman had not ; and would it have been reasonable or just for the Englishman to have prosecuted the Scotchman for an infringement on his monopoly ? In this way, the demands of society invariably lead to new adaptations in art. In many instances, only one mind may be engaged in making the discovery, but in others the subject is probably engaging something like an universal attention. A consideration of these circumstances, in our opinion, very materially lessens the claim of compensation for an invention. It is our belief, that if the invention be important, it cannot fail to be made sooner or later, and therefore the inventor, as he is called, is only the first who has had the luck to hit upon it ; had he let it alone, some one else, in all likelihood, would have found it out in a week, a month, or a year or two at farthest. The circumstance of there being such a swarm of claimants for the discovery of steam-navigation, affords a tolerably conclusive evidence of the truth of our remark.

On these grounds, the granting of patents is in some measure an injustice done to society at large. It is surely inconsistent with common sense that the first discoverer of the natural principle, that steam has the power of driving an object before it, or that vapour from coal will burn at the farther end of a tube, or that the atmosphere may be pumped from a closed vessel, shall greedily appropriate that principle, and shut out all others from participating in its benefits, except on such terms as he chooses to dictate. All that can reasonably be asked by any inventor or discoverer, is compensation corresponding to the value of the service he has performed. Society infers, that the most convenient mode of offering compensation is to grant a monopoly for a short definite period—a patent for fourteen years. The terms on which such a grant is conferred are clumsy in the extreme. A person may go from Scotland to England, there see a machine which is unknown in his own country, hasten home, and, pretending that he has made a discovery, get a patent, which gives him the exclusive privilege of using the said machine in Scotland. It may be said, that on another person finding that the discovery was already known in England, he may use it in defiance of the Scotch patentee ; true, he may do so, but at the risk of a litigation which may last two years, cost £1000 of expenses, and be attended with a monstrous degree of trouble and uncertainty. Such things are occurring every day. The legislature might remedy this great grievance by causing patents to be issued for the whole United Kingdom ; but another grievance, equally bad, remains to be dealt with—the power of taking patents for discoveries secretly imported from foreign countries. To remedy this and other evils, it would be necessary to appoint a board of skilled men, to whom should be assigned the entire business of examining inventions and issuing patents as they might think fit. Still, with all these simplifications, we doubt if either patentees or the public would be benefited. It seems to be in the very nature of monopolies to prevent improvement. The patentee never seems to entertain any other idea than that of making money by exorbitant charges. Having no fear of competition, he asks an extravagant price for his article, and consequently limiting his sales, he probably realises less than if he had come into fair competition in the market. The small returns gained by patents are so notorious, that many intelligent inventors decline having any thing to do with them. But by far the worst element in the question, is the bar to improvement caused by patents. When once a machine has been patented, it is placed in a kind of *taboo*. The patentee cannot alter it, without making it a different thing from that which he has monopolised, and therefore lets it alone. The public, also, see how it could be improved, but they too must let it alone, or incur the risk of a prosecution ; and as few men have a desire to be half ruined by law expenses, it happens that, except in very important cases, such as that of the steam-engine or spinning-frame, no attempt is made to improve the machine until the patent has expired. In this point of view alone, we consider that patents prevent more improvements in the arts than they create ; in other words, they retard the advancement of society.

We do not consider it necessary to say more, but may come to the following conclusions :—That the granting of patents is, upon the whole, a vicious mode of encouraging invention or rewarding merit, and should be restrained by the strictest regulations, and in all cases limited to a short period ; that the present law-tribunals are incompetent to settle disputes respecting patents or claims of priority of discovery, either cheaply or expeditiously, and should be

superseded, as far as this object is concerned, by courts composed of artisans, merchants, and men of science in different localities, empowered to judge and decide, without appeal, in two or three sittings, and at a small expense to litigants ; finally, that men should be encouraged by pecuniary rewards, medals, and honorary distinctions, to refrain from seeking patents for their inventions, and to depend more on the principle of free competition than stringent monopoly in disposing of the results of their ingenuity.

LIFE IN UPPER MISSOURI.

SECOND ARTICLE.

In a letter dated from Fort Mackenzie, Upper Missouri, 16th April 1840, our young friend of the peltry company gives a very interesting account of a voyage which he was obliged to make in the autumn of 1839, in order to have a meeting with his superior officer at the station near the mouth of the Yellowstone River. This was a voyage of not less than six hundred miles, and it was to be performed in a single canoe, attended by but one companion, under a considerable exposure to the attacks of unfriendly Indians. The courage with which it was undertaken, and the cool and steady skill with which it was conducted, show the more clearly to the advantage of our young adventurer, when we recollect the anxiety expressed by Bonneville, in his recently published narrative, on the occasion of his undertaking a similar voyage in the same country, attended by eight companions.

"I started on the 30th of August, in a canoe with an old voyageur of the name of Desjardin, to make the trip between the Maria* and Yellowstone Rivers. He could speak very little English, and I am no great things at French, but we could raise a crack, any how, as we paddled along. We made a pretty good trip the first day, and, never having paddled a canoe before, I was very tired at night, the day being very hot. When we put ashore for the night, the old man spread my bull hide (which is all the bed I carry on a voyage, with the exception of a good blanket to cover me) below a tree, and commenced preparations to cook. I told him to bring my little keg of whisky ; and after we had both taken a dram, I lay down, and never awoke till daybreak next morning. He had covered me up all snug, and said he did not think it worth while to wake me, as I must be very tired. The second day we passed through the bad land of Arrow River, and slept that night upon the sand-bar at the side of the river. The third morning we passed the Judith River, considered the most dangerous place for meeting war parties of Crows, who generally come down that river when they go to war with the Blackfeet. We passed very quietly ; but as great herds of buffaloes were raised and crossing the river, we had no doubt there were Indians close by. It is almost a sure sign of the proximity of men, when the buffaloes are raised, and it is astonishing at what a distance they scent you, if they get the wind of you. The old bulls are rascally-looking fellows, with their shaggy foreheads, and some of them are very fierce. We had some sport with them ; they got the wind of us, and started across the river, and got mired up to the belly in the soft adhesive sort of mud that lies all along the banks ; but no mire will keep them ; their strength is tremendous, and yet the vagabond wolves have the courage to attack them when hard pressed by hunger. One day I saw an instance of it, otherwise I would have doubted it very much. We saw a herd raised, and coming towards the river ; we halted to try and get a chance to kill one, as our meat was nearly done : we soon saw the cause of their running. About thirty or forty of the ugliest wolves I ever saw were in full chase ; they came so close to our canoe that I could have touched the foremost with my gun, but did not fire for fear of scaring the buffaloes. The old man at last fired at a cow, but only wounded her. If you had seen the way the wolves made off on hearing the gun, you would have laughed. They are very small, not much bigger than a small sheep dog, and of a greyish colour, but they have the impudence of the devil himself.

I mentioned the bad land of the Judith, which we passed through on the third day. It is so called on account of its barrenness ; it was the first time I had passed through it. It extends about sixty or seventy miles along both sides of the Missouri, below the Judith River ; it consists of high precipices of earth, of

* It is not uncommon for London music-composers to pretend to assume a copyright in old Scotch airs. A few years ago, one of those gentlemen endeavoured to appropriate the song and air, "We're a' aid noddin'," and actually raised an action at law against a music-seller for attempting to publish and sell it. The timely evidence of a lady who had heard the air forty years before, caused the prosecution to be dropped. An attempt was also made to appropriate "Charlie is my darling." The publisher of Mr Moore's Irish Melodies was more successful : on some of these being republished by a Scottish music-seller, on the supposition that they were transcripts from the popular voice, and therefore free to all, it was shown that they had undergone variations by way of improvement sufficient to establish a copyright in them. The claim was consequently allowed, and the rival publication suppressed.

* The Maria River is a small northern tributary of the Missouri ; the Yellowstone, as has been already stated, is a copious tributary flowing from the south, and joining the main stream after both have flowed nearly a thousand miles.—*Ed.*

every colour and shape, with here and there a band of bighorn, hanging, as it were, on the precipice. They are pretty animals, a good deal larger than a deer ; the male has very beautiful horns, curling completely round his ears. We had good weather to pass through this place, and owing to the river being confined a good deal, we went through rapidly, the current being pretty strong, and two or three rapids. However, our good luck soon left us ; the weather, from being very warm, became cold and chilly, with heavy rains, so that sometimes we had to lie down to sleep just as wet as if we had been in the river the whole day, as we never stopped unless the wind was too high for us to proceed with safety. One morning about sunrise, in particular, we were forced to put ashore under a high bank ; the wind blew a complete gale from the north, accompanied by heavy rain ; we made a fire of drift-wood with difficulty, and had to remain there the whole live-long day, exposed to the pelting of the pitiless storm. The wind was so high that we could not cross the river. At night the old man cut down the bank with an axe till he came to dry sand, which he spread over the mud pretty deep ; we then got some poles, and having set them up in a sloping position against the bank, covered them with my bull-skin, spread our blankets, and lay down, having previously made a good fire at the entrance of our little hut. We were drenched to the skin. I passed a pretty comfortable night, and felt no bad effects from my hard wet bed, but the old man was very unwell. We, however, started, and had not gone far when the weather became as bad as it had been the previous day ; so we were compelled to land again, but found a better place to encamp. Here the old man became very sick ; we, however, took a turn to try if we could kill a deer or elk, but were unsuccessful ; we then returned to our little camp, and made a comfortable bed of tops of willows, and as it cleared up in the afternoon, our bedding was dry ; but notwithstanding our good bed, I never passed a more miserable night in my life ; the old man became so sick towards midnight, that I thought he was dying, and he himself was of the same opinion. You may guess how a person would feel left alone in a wilderness about three hundred miles from the nearest post, the way to which being down the river or through the woods, where there are plenty of bears, and sometimes Indians, both being very unsafe customers to get close to. However, the old fellow weathered.

Two days afterwards we fell in with a boat on its way up to our post, when I got your letter and a little grog for my old fellow. They told us at the boat to look out, as some Assinaboins were camped on the Missouri, but they thought they probably might have raised camp. We were chuckling one fine morning at having got past them unseen some way or other. I had just reached my hand, and taken the kettle with some cold meat in it to take a snack, when, on turning a point, I saw what appeared to be Indian lodges among some trees. I told the old man ; he said it was only a speck of white earth. I told him, in French, it was white earth, there was some brown also ; the old lodges being brown, and the new ones white. On getting a little nearer, we saw the people moving about ; it was then too late to try and hide, as they had seen us, and warriors, women, and children, crowded to the river. We pushed straight towards where they were, and, letting our canoe drift, we examined our guns, fixed our ball pouches, and prepared for the worst, in case they were hostile. The men, to the number of about twenty, jumped into the river, and swam to a sand bar about the middle of it. I told the old man to steer direct for them, and when we came close, I threw the rope of the canoe to a young warrior. I then saw that none of them were armed ; I gave them a small present of ammunition and tobacco. The old chief then made signs if we had seen any Blackfeet on our way. I made the sign none ; and after his jabbering in Assinaboin, and my talking in French and English, he told us by signs we might go, and said, 'We were good.' That was the only word I knew in his tongue ; so we started off, well content to get free of them so easily.

Towards evening the same day we saw four men on horseback, emerging from the woods at a considerable distance. We thought they were Crow Indians, as the Assinaboins have scarcely any horses ; but, on nearing them, found they were whites by their appearance. They turned out to be four beaver-trappers, going to Milk River to hunt. From them we learned that Mr L—— [the officer whom our young friend was on his way to see] had gone up the Yellowstone River to the Crow Fort. Two of the poor fellows got killed, either by the Blackfeet or Assinaboins. I have seen one of those who escaped since ; he is on his way trapping from this post to Fort Union, before starting back, and they had made up their mind that something bad had happened to me. The same day some men arrived from this fort, in charge of Harvey, one of the clerks, who was dismissed for being too severe upon the men. I gave his men and my band a good allowance, and next morning he and I started across the level prairie on horseback, and reached the fort that night about nine o'clock, both men and horses done up. Here was another palaver. Where have you been all this time ! — have you been attacked ? — and so on, but all glad to get news from below. I

arrived, and I must say, I passed the most agreeable ten days with him I have spent in this country."

By and bye, it was necessary to make preparations for returning. Our young friend was anxious to have some companion in addition to the old Canadian ; whose death on the journey might have proved a very serious matter ; but no man could be spared. Fortunately, three younger Canadians, on their way back to Fort Mackenzie, came at this juncture to Fort Union, and set his mind at ease on the score of company. The return journey was less agreeable than the former, in consequence of the advanced season. One of the three men was to act as cook, another to hunt for provisions, and a third to take charge of the pack-horse. "I was not extremely well provided in all respects except horses, which were not very good : we had therefore to move along very slowly. The third night, we were camped at a place called the Elkhorn Prairie (on account of a large pile of horns collected near the centre). It came on one of the most severe nights of rain I ever saw ; we actually lay in a pool of water the whole night. It continued as bad all the following day, so that we never moved camp at all, but remained there. We were here surrounded with wolves : the varlets, in bands of fifteen and twenty, would come within twenty yards of our fire, and we did not like to fire on them, as we were afraid the Assinaboins were camped on the Riviere au Tremble, on the opposite side from where we were. After this rain, the roads were almost impassable, as a sort of rascally adhesive mud, washed from the hills, filled all the bottoms, and in some places we had more than a foot of water. This state of roads lasted for six days, till we came to a place called 'the dry fork,' where there is generally water only in the spring ; but when we arrived close, it was full from bank to bank, and all the hills on the other side covered with snow. This rascally place is covered with quicksands, so I sent two men to sound for a good place to cross our horses. We durst not ride, but stripped and led them across without any damage. You would think it pretty severe, I believe, to wade up to the middle in 'snow broo,' but to a voyageur that is nothing : strike a light, take a smoke, and after a few exclamations from the Frenchmen, push on, laughing and joking as contentedly as men can be. I have seen pretty hard times, both on account of scarcity of provisions and severity of weather ; but let us have suffered ever so much, sat us by a good fire, and give us some meat to cook, every privation is forgot, and nothing but joking, talking, and smoking, is the order of the day or night, as the case may be. A Frenchman, when he cannot get anything to eat, seems to make up the want pretty well by grumbling ; and indeed when they are well off, it seems always to do them good to growl a little. I do not know if this holds good with the old country French, but it is certainly the case with Canadians, who are almost as ignorant as an old buffalo bull. It is generally remarked that the English are great swearers, but they cannot for a moment be compared to the voyageurs, whose oaths are beyond any thing for profanity I ever heard. Two who made the voyage up here with me are considered the worst in the fort, and sometimes I could scarcely endure to hear them for a moment ; indeed, I had a good many quarrels with them on that account.

The weather was very changeable (October). One night we camped under some brushwood ; the day had been fine, but towards evening the north wind set in rather *sueu*. During the night I thought my blanket weighed pretty heavy, but did not try to find out the cause, and fell sound asleep again. When I awoke about three hours before day, I was perspiring much, and the weight of my blanket was terrible. I put out my hand, and found that I was covered with snow, nearly a foot deep. Shortly after, we all got up, and made a good fire. I had no stockings with me, so I tore a flannel shirt, and wrapped my feet in it—one of the men giving me a large pair of moccasins to put over all. This was the source of considerable merriment—the size of feet, &c. ; but we all found the good of wrapping up well before the day was finished, as the water froze in the evening close to our fire, when we were smoking a pipe after supper. This continued for two days, at the end of which I could not break a hole in the ice to water my horse. After this, it began to thaw a little, and in four days we came on fresh tracks of men, and kept a good lookout for enemies. Two days after that again, we found the boat, which had not been able to get up, owing to low water and bad weather. We astonished the greenhorns a little by galloping at full speed towards the boat, yelling like Indians, and firing our guns. In a minute they were all on deck, and when we got within hailing distance, I could hear them singing out to Brugiere, the clerk in charge of the boat, 'It's Monsieur —, he is not dead yet !' The reason of their saying this was, I did not expect to be more than two days at Fort Union, before starting back, and they had made up their mind that something bad had happened to me. The same day some men arrived from this fort, in charge of Harvey, one of the clerks, who was dismissed for being too severe upon the men. I gave his men and my band a good allowance, and next morning he and I started across the level prairie on horseback, and reached the fort that night about nine o'clock, both men and horses done up. Here was another palaver. Where have you been all this time ! — have you been attacked ? — and so on, but all glad to get news from below. I

may mention, after all, I had been only twenty-two days from Fort Union to here, and considering the weather and horses I had, it was a good journey.

"NEW TALE OF A TUB."

THE New Tale of a Tub appears as a thin small folio, consisting of some sixteen pages of humorous verse, with seven or eight lithographic drawings, the former being by Mr F. W. N. Bayley, and the latter by Aubrey, from designs by Lieutenant J. S. Cotton.* If any man has a tolerable drawing-room, in which he finds it sometimes rather difficult to get company up to smiling pitch, let him possess himself of this laughter-moving volume, and deposit it on the principal table in the said room ; after which, we venture to predict, awful half hours before dinner, and tedious yawning whole hours after it, will be known no longer in that locality. The Tale of a Tub is told both by the drawings and the verse, clearly enough by the latter, but with outrageous drollery by the former. The scene is in Bengal. On a coolish day, two native gentlemen, one tall and thin, the other short and stout, resolve to walk into the country, and enjoy a picnic. An empty barrel has been carried out by their servants, with their provisions, and this, being placed upright on the plain, forms an agreeable shade under which they may sit at their ease to enjoy their feast :

" Ham and chicken, and bread and cheese,
They make a pass to spread on the grass ;
They sit at their ease, with their plates on their knees,
And now their hungry jaws they appear,
And now they turn to the glass ;
For Hodgson's ale
Is genuine pale,
And the bright champagne
Flows not in vain,
The most convivial of souls to please
Of these very thirsty Bengalese !"

But alas ! not far from the scene of their festivities, a huge tiger reposes in the jungle, and suddenly one of them wakes it by the drawing of a cork. The animal rises, and approaches the scene of action,

" With a temperate mind
For a beast of his kind,
And a tail uncommonly long behind."

Soon the scent of the ham, or of the blood of our banqueters, excites him, and he appeals them with a tremendous roar. They leap to their legs :

" He's at 'em, he's on 'em, the jungle guest !
(When a man's life by peril is prest,
His wits will sometimes be at their best ;
So the presence of Tiger, I find,
Inspires our heroes with presence of mind.)
There's no time to be lost ;
Down the glasses are tot !
The Bengalese have abandon'd their grub,
And they're dodging their gentleman round the tub."

The print illustrative of the "artful dodge" is admirable, particularly the face of the short and stout man, which is pressed close to the side of the barrel, with a look of the most intense consternation, while the tiger comes stealthily round by the other side. The tiger

— " feels himself that their dodge is clever,"

but he is at the same time impatient to be at them ; so he determines to put an end to evasions by leaping at them across the barrel. He makes the spring, but finds himself balanced on the near edge of it, his fore-feet down in the inside, and the heavier part of his body on the outside. He thus overbalances the tub, which tumbles and falls over him :

" The Tiger at first had a hobby-horse ride,
But now he is decently quarter'd inside.
And the question is next, long as Fortune may frown on him,
How the two Bengalese are to keep the Tub down on him !"

They get on the top of it, and make every effort to retain their enemy in his prison. It is a moment of intense anxiety. The thin man, peering over the verge of the cask, sees, luckily for him, the point of the tiger's tail projected a little way through the bung-hole. He immediately seizes it, and pulls as hard as he can, while the short and thick man as eagerly pulls by his skirts in order to increase the tension. But this, though a momentary relief, is but a dreary lookout :

" There they must pull, if they pull for weeks,
Straining their stomachs, and bursting their cheeks,
While Tiger alternately roars and squeaks ;
* * * * *
Yes, yes, they must hold him tight,
From night till morning, from morning till night !
Mustn't stop to eat ! mustn't stop to weep !
Mustn't stop to drink ! mustn't stop to sleep !
No cry ! no laugh ! no rest ! no grub !
Till they starve the Tiger under the Tub !"

The tub now gives a lurch, but the men, though they jump off, do not quit their advantage. The next print represents the unfortunate tiger, as he may be by this time be well called, with his head and fore-feet out, his hind parts still in the barrel, the long man still pulling his tail through the bung-hole, and the short man, with might and main, and a most fearfully concerned face, pulling at his long friend's skirts behind. The mixture of rage and comeliness in the profile of

* London : Colnaghi and Puckle, 33, Cockspur Street. 1841.

Mr Tiger is exquisite. A rich conceit now strikes the mind of the tall gentleman, which he immediately communicates to his companion.

"Excellent! marvellous! beautiful! Oh!
Isn't it, now, an original go?
Hold! stay! I'm fainting away.
Laughter, I'm certain, will kill me to-day.
And Short and Stout is bursting his skin,
And almost in fits is Tall and Thin."

The long and the short is, that Long and Short tie a knot on Tiger's tail, and allow him to crawl away with the Tub on his back, while they, freed from danger, dance in exultation, and buffet their helpless enemy with the remains of their feast. Such, reader, is the New Tale of a Tub, as far as narrative is concerned. Of the better part of the book—its prints—we can give you no adequate idea, which we hope you will consider as a strong additional reason for what would be your duty at any rate, namely, to go and buy the volume.

INUNDATIONS OF THE RHONE AND SAONE.

THE south-eastern departments of France have recently been the scene of most destructive inundations. That portion of the country is watered chiefly by the separate and conjoined streams of the Rhone and Saone, and upon these rivers the risings in question took place. The source of the Rhone is of a peculiar character, and one which exposes its waters to sudden and uncommon changes of level. It finds its origin in the *Glacières de la Fourche*, near Mount St Gothard, in the highlands of Switzerland, and after a remarkable passage through the Lake of Geneva, descends into a very low and warm southern country. Heavy falls of snow or rain, therefore, or extensive meltings of ice, in Switzerland, must rapidly quicken the current and affect the height of the Rhone; and any surcharge of the Lake of Geneva will tend to produce the same effect. It is obvious, indeed, that all rivers which rise in high and cold regions, and pass into warm ones, must have a particular tendency to inundations; and the glacial origin of the Rhone gives it this character in a double degree. The Saone, also, passes directly from north to south.

A series of French newspapers, now before us, points to the 30th of October (1840), as being the day on which the people of Lyons first became alarmed at the height attained by the waters of the Rhone and Saone, in the angle formed by the confluence of which rivers their city is situated. The rains had been heavy for some time previously, and, on the 31st, they continued to fall without intermission. Still the inhabitants of Lyons derived consolation from the hope that the flood, which was then two feet higher than it had been since 1812, had reached its ultimate point of elevation. The country, as the case stood, had sustained a vast deal of injury, both on the course of the Rhone and Saone, which rivers were alike affected. The whole of the low-lying lands on their banks were desolated; hundreds of houses overturned; many cattle swept away; and crowds of the survivors pent up in corners without food. But this was a mere inkling of the disasters to follow. After the 31st October, the rains continued to fall incessantly for many days, and the Rhone and Saone, with their tributaries, rose to a height unexampled within the last hundred years. The first serious evil sustained by the people of Lyons consisted in the bursting of the waters into the gas conduits, by which catastrophe the city was of course left in darkness. The Morand Bridge was then carried away, and the Rhone and Saone formed a new junction through the centre of the city, filling the streets with water to a great height. Houses, and even whole streets, were sapped and overturned. The destruction of property, both in doors and out of doors, was immense, and the loss of human lives most appalling. "During the inundation (says the *Courier de Lyons*), the archbishop generously gave up his palace to the unfortunate chased from their domiciles by the waters." Almost every house was seen with planks, or ropes, or ladders, attached to it, by means of which the inhabitants, driven to the upper storeys, maintained communication with the streets; while charitable people and public servants went about in boats to supply them with provisions, at the expense of the magistracy, clergy, and those who contributed for the purpose. In this way alone, was support given to the majority of those who remained pent up in their dwellings, spending the night most commonly in darkness, and trembling hourly lest the walls around them should be undermined and crumble on their heads. Others fled to the heights near the city, and signal-shots of distress were heard from them continually, for many were without a morsel of food. Shrieks of distress, and shouts for help, met the ear in every direction. Such was the condition of a great part of Lyons, from the beginning of November till the 20th or 21st of the same month, when the greater part of the city was freed from the waters.

But Lyons scarcely could be said to suffer so much as the numerous smaller towns and villages on the Rhone and Saone. The Saone, to the north of Lyons, formed one immense lake, covering a space of thirty miles; and the banks of the Rhone presented similar scenes. Whole villages were lost under water; and the bodies of men, women, children, and cattle, floated in great numbers on the floods. Beauregard, a pretty village on the Saone, was left a ruin. At Guercins, forty

houses were overturned; at Cormoranches, one hundred and twenty-seven; at Palancon, not one house in thirty was left standing; at Saint Didier, a third of the houses were carried away; Saint Romain was entirely destroyed; Puits Guimain preserved only its church and one house; at Feillens, thirty houses fell to the ground; and at Menzat, twelve or fifteen. Such were the devastations among the villages on the Saone, as reported toward the close of the inundation. The lives of the inhabitants in most cases were saved; but grain and other kinds of property were carried off or destroyed, and the poor people left shivering and starving about the farm-houses on the higher grounds.

In the direction of the department of Jura, above Lyons, and towards the sources of the Rhone, the destruction was appalling, showing that the rains were equally if not more severe in the high lands. During the inundation, the villages of Chausson, Long-Vy, Petit Noir, and Peseau, were reduced to the semblance of low black rocks, being buried to the chimney-tops in water. The Rhone presented the aspect of a succession of great lakes, from Lyons to Avignon, and from Avignon to the sea. A letter (dated 10th November) from Nismes, a city a short way west of Avignon, says—"As far as the view extends, we perceive but one sheet of water, in the midst of which appear the tops of trees and houses, with the miserable inhabitants perched upon them. At Valabregue, an island on the Rhone, they have hung out a black banner from the churchyard, nearly two thousand persons being assembled in that spot, which is on an elevation. Steam-boats are attempting to carry bread to Valabregue and other similarly situated places, but can scarcely effect it from the inequality of the ground. For ten days the rains have never ceased. The space covered by the waters near Avignon is calculated at about thirty-six leagues in length, and sixty leagues in breadth (!). Human bodies are seen passing continually on the waters. In all the villages of the plain, such as Roquemaure, Meyne, and Fourque, the inhabitants are driven to the roofs of their houses; there they ring bells, and hang out black banners as signals of distress; and from Nismes and other places able to afford aid, it is given freely and anxiously by means of boats."

We have now given, from the scattered notices of the French newspapers, something like a general view of the devastations produced by the Rhone and Saone in the districts watered by them; and we have it in our power, fortunately, to add a detailed and interesting account of the state of the city of Avignon on the Rhone, contained in a letter from an eye-witness. (We find this in the *Heresford Times* of 2d January.) From this communication, a good idea of the particular condition of each town on the line of the inundations may be formed:—"Avignon, November 1840.—It was an awful thing this rising up of the river, day after day, from the 27th October to the 4th November, gradually and fearfully mounting. People began climbing first on chairs, then on tables, then to the first floor, then to the second, and so up to the gallerie. The few folks that could get out of their houses, rushed about with consternation in their looks, not knowing where to go; in fact, they could not go far, for the inundated parts of the town were resolved into a little isle round the High Rock, on which is situated Le Palais de Pape and the cathedral, with the Place de l'Horloge on which the Hotel de Ville is placed, and a very few beginnings of streets, for their latter ends were all plunged in water. People of all classes talked familiarly with the first person they met in the streets, for the danger and desolation were common, asking the state of the Rhone, and how many inches per hour it had risen; those in their houses cried out eagerly to the few boats that passed to save them, to bring them bread, meat, and water, and that only when by good luck they lived in a great thoroughfare, for the out-of-the-way streets, and far-off alleys and *cals de sae*, where no boat passed, had no such advantage. The bills upon the walls served as so many accurate rhodometers, as line after line of their printing became successively covered by the water, until the tops of doors and windows on the ground floor were out of sight, and then the tin plates of insurance-offices became the best marks: casks of all descriptions, furniture, &c., swam about at their ease, barrels of madder, each one worth 1000 francs, on all sides took to floating.

As far as the supplies of bread lasted, the mayor sent round boats, with a doctor to administer relief, and as they passed, some fifteen or twenty hungry heads were exhibited at the windows begging for bread. The night of the 4th November was the most horrible; I had taken refuge at the house of a friend, for my own was up to the staircase in water. Before night my asylum also was inundated; I heard all night cries of distress—"Au secours! au secours!" [help! help!] Guns fired as signals—the crash of houses falling where no help could come—and in the midst of all these horrible sounds, the cry of *feu* [fire] was raised. It was too true: smoke and flames were seen issuing from a house in a by-street; people saw it from their houses, but could give no aid, so cried lustily, "Au feu! au feu!" [To the fire! to the fire!] The guns fired, the tocsin rung forth, the drums beat, all was confusion—but in a short time all was over. A quantity of quick-lime, which had been immersed, had suddenly slackened, and set fire to a heap of straw, forming the cause of the sudden conflagration. In the

morning, hundreds of families in the lower quarter of the town had to escape as they best could on rafts and boats, seeking asylums in the *escares* or the prisons. Hundreds of horses were brought up also to the upper part of the town; and what with the anxious crowd, carriages, carts, furniture, and merchandise, never was such a scene of universal chaotic confusion beheld as that on the Rocher, from the top of which the curious beheld another sight—one continued sheet of water as far as the eye could reach; a few trees, whose height enabled their tops to be seen, and a very few roofs of farm-houses, were all that broke the monotony of the view. Alas! all the rest was under water; crops were lost, goods spoiled, houses washed away, horses drowned, peasants crying for help, the poultry and rabbits escaping to the tops of trees, thousands of ducks and geese carried along on the stream." One day, the population assembled in great alarm at the wooden bridge over the Rhone. It was threatened by an immense raft of balks of timber, and must have given way—so cutting off all communication with Nismes, the only source of food and assistance—had not the mayor, with a few courageous men, disengaged the logs, and launched them through the arches one by one. "Eleven-twelfths of the town were now under water; the market was held under the portico of the theatre; the bakers' shops were besieged by the famished multitude, and soldiers were placed at the doors to keep off the crowd. It was really curious to see the variety of rafts constructed by the householders to escape from their islands, or to get food and water; doors and window shutters, casks, and wood of all sorts, were put into requisition. To this end we made three, and during the first days of the floods I navigated about, not without difficulty and danger, from the force of the current in some of the streets. Having bought at several bakers' shops as much bread as I could get (for each baker was forbidden to sell more than 4 lbs. to each person, but I got several people to buy for me also), I deposited the whole in my pillow case, eovers, and towels, and got a raft with three men to go and distribute it to the starving poor in the alleys of my neighbourhood. Having done this to my satisfaction, and still more to that of the miserable hungry mob, I and my men attempted to return; this was not so easy, for the force of the current was so rapid, that the water overflowed the raft, which soon slipped away from under our feet, and plunged us all four into the watery element. I could swim well enough, but the others cried out for help; a boat, with ten people in it, appeared to our rescue, and we all four clung to its sides, but this, to an already overloaded boat, caused it to fill with water rapidly, and in a short time it sunk, and fourteen people were now struggling in the water; most fortunately, a larger boat was advancing behind, which, coming up to our assistance, rescued the whole of us from our dangerous situation."

But our courageous Englishman was not content with these acts of benevolence. He went to the mayor, and, being able to swim and to scull a boat, begged to be employed on some service of danger, offering even to cross the river, if necessary. The mayor granted his request, and commissioned him to take a boat and bring off the whole sisterhood of a convent, in a distant part of the town. "I obeyed the mayor's directions, and taking a boat, proceeded to the convent. Here right glad were they to see me; and one by one, by a ladder from the first floor window, descended the fair sisters and the abbess, and a boat-load of girls from fourteen to eighteen years old. Arrived with my load as far as I could, I jumped out, carried them through the shallow water with all their baggage, and, walking with the squadron through the town to the archbishop's palace, delivered them into his hands as a precious charge. This operation I repeated till the whole convent, and some forty young ladies, were brought away and conducted to the *archeréché*. The next day I went to see the lady abbess. She received me with great kindness, and begged to know of what service she could be to me, meaning, I have no doubt, in the way of indulgences and absolutions. 'Madam,' said I, 'I know that it is to a Protestant you owe your deliverance; and the only thing I beg as a favour of you, is in future to regard our sect with toleration, and believe that they can do good deeds.' She was struck, as the saying goes, 'all of a heap.' This is historic; and since that, men meet me in the streets, and beg to embrace me. One man actually cried whilst he was talking to me, so much was his heart touched."

From the 10th to the 20th of November, the Rhone fell several inches during each day, but always rose again somewhat during the night. About the 20th, the permanent decension of the flood began, and continued slowly progressing for some days, until the streets were exposed to view, with about a foot of mud upon them. Then began a general cleansing of houses, and every housewife brought out her wasted furniture for scouring and repairing. The rise being sudden, and its extent unexpected, no one had thought of taking their pictures and other valuables up stairs, so that every sort of article of furniture was spoiled. Wines and oil were lost in the cellars, for the "bottles danced all kinds of dances together." Goods and merchandise (continues our letter-writer) of an immense value, are destroyed or damaged; houses are cracking up the middle, and the foundations sinking; poor labourers are thrown out of employ, and this at a moment when they have lost all they possessed in

their houses. Every business and trade has suffered ; not a person but has felt the effects of the calamity more or less ; scarcely any sum of money can totally repair the injuries we have suffered. The loss sustained by Avignon alone is roughly calculated at five million francs. The government gives 500,000 francs towards the relief of the sufferers. This has been the greatest inundation on record at Avignon. Two great floods took place in 1755 and 1827, the former by far the highest, and yet this one of 1840 was one English yard higher."

The entire actual loss of property through these inundations cannot well be calculated. A letter from Nismes estimates the loss near the mouth of the Rhone at thirty millions of francs. The French Chambers have already voted five millions for the relief of the victims of the floods, and large sums have been raised for the same purpose by private subscriptions. The loss of life that must have attended the disaster is frightful to think of, but, as yet at least, cannot be computed with any degree of accuracy.

SKETCHES OF SUPERSTITIONS.

POPULAR FANCIES OF THE IRISH.—FIRST ARTICLE.

IRELAND has long teemed with superstitions of the wildest and most imaginative cast. Indeed, up to the present day, civilisation has been more ineffective in rooting them out from that country than from any other that can pretend to a place among the debauched regions of the earth. In the western and south-western provinces of the island, in particular, the people still cling tenaciously to the superstitions of their forefathers ; and of this fact not only the narratives of tourists, but the records of judiciary courts, afford many recent proofs. Deaths are yet not unfrequently occasioned by children being dipped in rivers and sainted wells to cure them of being *fairy-stricken* ; and young women labouring under severe puerperal illness are often allowed to perish from inattention, because their friends regard them as changelings, the real parties being carried off, according to the general belief, to serve as nurses to *infant fairies*. Ireland being still in this condition, it is obvious that the inquirer into the superstitions of that island must enjoy a great advantage over those who but rake up the ashes, as it were, of similar follies, in places where they have been long extinct. Mr T. Crofton Croker has indeed shown this to be the case, most convincingly, in his three entertaining volumes on the "Fairy Legends and Traditions" of his native land. To this work, the most ample existing repertory of knowledge on the subject, and to the essay by Dr Grimm of Gottingen, printed along with it, we are happy to acknowledge large obligations in drawing up the following account of the superstitions of Ireland.

In addition to that ubiquitous supernatural race, entitled *good people*, *elves*, or *fairies*, to whom the same characters of diminutive stature, beauty of person, social habits, and mixed qualities of disposition, are every where ascribed, the Irish have long put faith in the existence of various other supernatural tribes, of which traces are to be found in different countries, but which have characters peculiarly well-marked in the Green Isle. The most prominent of these spirits are the *cluricaune*, the *banshee*, the *phooka*, the *merrow*, the *dullahan*, and the *fir-darrig*. Before the strange habits ascribed to these imaginary beings are adverted to, it may be observed regarding the elves, that the Irish, like most other nations, believe in the existence of two kinds, good and evil. The good elf or fairy is called *shefro*, *she* or *shige* being the root of the term, as is partly shown by the word *ban-she*. Even the shefros have dark shades in their character ; as, though they sometimes confer benefits on mortals, they steal children and nursing-women, and all their beauty and the splendour of their dwellings are regarded as illusory, they being really old and ugly, and their palaces hovels. But the worse species of elf, styled in Irish the *leprechan*, is all evil together—in short, a malicious demon. Ireland is rife with stories of the mischiefs brought by the leprechan on poor men, their crops, cattle, and families.

The *cluricaune*, unlike the elf, is altogether a solitary being. He presents, when seen, the comical appearance of a little old man, with a pea-green coat adorned by large buttons, broad shoe-buckles, and a cocked hat of the old French cut. He is perpetually found smoking and drinking, and his favourite resting position is on the top of a cask in some well-filled cellar. He seldom exhibits himself wilfully, but is sometimes caught unexpectedly by the eyes of mortals, and on such occasions, people who are knowing in these matters endeavour to seize him, for he has properties which make him a most valuable servant. The cluricaune has a purse about him, containing one shilling, and if any one can get hold of that purse and eoin, he gets a treasure indeed ; for, when paid away, the shilling always returns to the purse. But the cluricaune is commonly too old, or too tricky, for his captors. He carries about with him a double of the magic purse, and when people think they have the real shilling, behold they have only a current coin of the realm, which, goodness knows, is very unapt to return if once sent away ! Then the tricky spirit will strive to make his captor turn his head to look at something or other ; and if this is once done, by the

laws of cluricaune existence, the spirit can make himself invisible, and nothing will be heard more of him, but his mocking laugh of triumph at his escape. Again, if he is compelled to point out where treasures lie, he urges his mortal captor to mark the place with a stone, or some such thing. If this be done, the vainly triumphing mortal, when he returns with his spade to the place, will find a dozen marks instead of one, and will again get nothing for his pains but the pleasure of hearing the mocking "ha ! ha !" of the cluricaune.

Though a valuable servant, if rightly managed, the cluricaune is a very bad master. Like the *nis* of Germany, he sometimes attaches himself to a particular family, and domineers over them in the most intolerable way, being ejectible neither by bell, book, nor candle, coaxing, nor abuse. In some of the former sketches upon this subject, it was mentioned that an Irish gentleman, who was troubled with a familiar, thought to get rid of it by removal to another house, but was shocked, on the morning of the flitting, to hear a voice exclaim from the hung-hole of a cask, on one of the loaded carts, "Here we go, master ! here we go—all together !" "What ! are you there too ? then we may as well stay where we are. Unpack the carts." The cluricaune was the familiar spirit who had the honour to figure on this occasion, as he has done on many similar ones, according to the creed of Ireland.

The *banshee* is also a spirit which attaches itself to particular families, but is of a very different character from the cluricaune. The banshee is not a spirit of fun and trickery, but of gloom and death. *Bean-shighe*, signifying *she-fairy*, is understood to be the uncorrupted form of the term. This spirit attends on some particular house, always ancient and illustrious, and whenever any of its members are "sick unto death," sends forth mournful shrieks of warning under the windows. The Highland family of Maclean of Lochbuie is one of the few Scottish houses, believed (once at least) to have such attendant spectres. In Ireland the Butler, O'Brien, Kearney, Rice, and Hussey families are among those haunted in a similar way ; and Miss Lefanu, a niece of R. Brinsley Sheridan, tells in her Memoirs of Mrs Frances Sheridan, published in 1824, that that lady's death in France, as some of the family living in Ireland declared, was indicated to them there by the banshee of the Sheridans. They were very angry when some sceptic hinted, that Mrs Frances Sheridan being a Chamberlain by birth, the banshee, which never wails but for *blood-relations*, had made a mistake in the case.

The banshee is commonly held either to be the spirit of some unfortunate ancestress, or of some person who, like the Bodach Glas of the MacIvors (a sort of male banshee), had been misused by an ancestor, and stuck to the family, in a spirit of revenge, to triumph over them in their hour of distress. Though it may be thought scarcely worth while to examine into this superstition in a spirit of serious and expository inquiry, yet one remarkable banshee case affords such an excellent opportunity for doing so, and is besides in itself so curious, that we shall relate and make some observations on it here. Lady Fanshawe, a woman of unimpeachable veracity, was the original narrator of it, in passage of her memoirs of her husband, describing her stay with him in Ireland. She relates that she and her husband went to pay a visit to Lady Honor O'Brien, an unmarried lady who did not enjoy the best character in the world. "There," she says, "we stayed three nights. On the first of these nights I received a great surprise in my chamber, when, about one o'clock, I heard a voice that wakened me. I drew the curtain, and in the casement of the window I saw, by the light of the moon, a woman leaning into the window, through the casement, in white, with red hair, and pale and ghastly complexion. She spoke loud, and in a tone I had never heard, thrice, 'A horse !' and then, with a sigh more like the wind than breath, she vanished, and to me her body looked more like a thick cloud than substance. I was so much frightened, that my hair stood on end, and my night-clothes fell off. I pulled and pinched your father (Sir R. Fanshawe), who never woke during the disorder I was in ; but at last was much surprised to see me in this fright, and more so when I related the story, and showed him the window opened."

"In the morning (continues Lady Fanshawe) about five o'clock, the lady of the house came to see us, saying she had not been in bed all night, because a cousin O'Brien of hers, whose ancestors had owned that house, had desired her to stay with him in his chamber, and that he died at two o'clock ; and she said, 'I wish you to have had no disturbance, for 'tis the custom of the place, that when any of the family are dying, the shape of a woman appears in the window every night till they be dead.' This woman was many ages ago deceived by the owner of this place, who murdered her in his garden, and flung her into the river under the window ; but truly I thought not of it when I lodged you here, it being the best room in the house. We made but little reply to her speech, but disposed ourselves to be gone suddenly." In this case—one much rested on by believers, on account of the narrator's good sense and high character—the marks of deception seem to us palpable as the light of day. The *opened window* might in itself settle all doubt, for true spirits find highways in key-holes, and despise the opposition of glass panes. Then the Lady Honoria's equivocal re-

putation must not be forgotten ; and it is to be observed that it was she herself who came, by daylight, to "wish they had had no disturbance," and to tell them of the banshee and the "dying cousin." We have only her word for there being any such dying cousin ; but, however this may be, beyond a doubt Lady Honoria was mystifying her guests. If a reason is sought, it might be found, perhaps, simply in her romping character ; and she might also have a fancy to quiz a woman who had the advantage of her in sense and virtue ; or she might be keeping up the honour of the O'Briens, and the O'Brien banshee. But the open window is the strong point. We may conclude by observing that it surprises us to find these proofs of deception passed over by Sir Walter Scott and all who have noticed the case. Mr Croker explains it lamely, by speaking of the "turbulent times" and "lively imagination" of Lady Fanshawe. Every word and act of hers proves that she had a sound, clear, and unexcitable head.

The *phooka* is perhaps the most characteristic and truly national of all the Irish spirits, and one of the best defined in its habits and main features. Not that we can procure any precise idea of what the phooka is in point of personal formation, for it is sometimes a horse and sometimes an eagle ; but its doings are always the same. It is an evil spirit, resembling the Tartar steed of Mazeppa—a creature which whirls the person who falls into its power, through the air, over bogs and precipices, at the wildest speed. In short, the phooka is the spirit of the mountain stags of Ireland. Its victims are sufferers from the nightmare of intoxication. This explanation of the phooka superstition is certainly the correct one, and so any body may be assured on looking at the famous story of Daniel O'Rourke, who fell asleep under the castle walls of Carrig-a-phooka, and whom the phooka, in the shape of an eagle, carried up to the moon. Well does Mr Croker know the true source of the phooka's bewitchments, though indeed many other superstitious imaginings may not unreasonably be assigned, in part at least, to the same cause. This individual spirit, however, is certainly the especial spirit of the *worm*. Morty Sullivan, Mr Croker tells us, once set out upon a journey, and towards night fell in with a strange, red-eyed old woman, who asked his name. "Morty Sullivan, at your service," said the boy, meaning the last words only in civility. The old woman, however, read them otherwise, and took him at his word. Hurrying Morty onwards for a bit, she at last showed him a jet-black horse. "Mount, Morty, mount !" said she, and, without more ado, pitched him on to the back of the steed, which bounded off like the wind, "now springing down a fearful precipice, now clearing the rugged bed of a torrent, and rushing like the dark midnight storm through the mountains." Morty Sullivan was found next morning at the foot of a rock, sorely bruised, and he is said to have sworn on the spot, by the hand of O'Sullivan (and that is no small oath), *ne'er again to take a full quart bottle of whisky with him again on a pilgrimage*." Thus archly does Mr Croker indicate his notions of the superstition under consideration. Father Mathew will assuredly banish the phooka from the emerald of the deep.

The *merrow* of the Irish is, as regards the meaning of the term, precisely the English mermaid, *moriach* being a compound of *muir* the sea, and *oigh* a maid. Yet the merrows of Ireland approximate more to the ideas entertained by the Shetlanders regarding the seal than to the common notions of mermaids, as half-human, half-piscine beings. The people of the far north imagine the seal to put off its skin every ninth night, and to appear then in a form completely human ; and they further say, that fishermen have sometimes caught females without the seal-skin, and have taken them home as housewives. Some such notions have the Irish of the shape of the merrow, though it does not appear that they conceive it to be transformed, but merely to be a being, in a human shape, capable of living in the deep ; only so, however, when in possession of a *cuhleen druit*, or little enchanted diving-cap. Mr Croker gives an entertaining little legend, illustrative of this subject, which we shall repeat, slightly abridged, for the amusement of our readers.

Dick Fitzgerald was sitting one morning by the side of the sea, smoking his pipe, quite lonesome, and thinking to himself that a man without a wife was, after all, like a bottle without a drop of drink in it, or the left leg of a pair of scissors, or any thing not complete ; when lo ! he saw a beautiful young creature, combing her long sea-green hair, upon the ocean-sands. Beside her lay a little cap, the *cuhleen druit*. Dick knew what was what, and seized the cap, knowing that he was then sure of her. When the merrow saw this, she fell a-crying, and very salt, no doubt, were the tears she shed. "Don't cry, my darling," said Dick ; but, as she cried the more, he thought she did not comprehend him, and tried the universal language, which all women, fish or no fish, understand. He took and squeezed her hand, which was a very pretty hand, only a little webbed between the fingers. The merrow was wonderfully pacified, and ceased whining at once. But she had yet doubts. "Man," said she, looking up in Dick's face, "man," says she, "will you eat me ?" "By all the check aprons between Dingle and Tralee," cried Dick, amazed, "I'd as soon eat myself ! Ah ! some ugly thief of a fish put that in your head." "Man," says the merrow again, "what will you do with me, if you won't eat me ?" The neat

way she called him "man" settled the matter entirely. "Fish," returned he, trying to speak short like her, "fish, here's my word for you, this blessed morning, that I'll make you Mrs Fitzgerald, before all the world." "Never say the word twice," says the merrow; "I'm yours, Mister Fitzgerald. Just stop till I twist up my hair." So she put her hair in order, which was all right, as she knew she was going among strangers; and then she was ready. But first she stooped down, and whispered some words close to the sea. "I'm just sending word to my father," said she to Dick, "not to be waiting breakfast for me." "Who's your father?" said Dick. "Why, he's the king of the waves, to be sure." "A king's daughter! Oh! I'm nothing else but a made man. There's plenty of money in the sea, and, to speak the truth, I have nothing but a straw bed at home. But, perhaps, you've got no such things as beds with you?" "By all means," said the merrow; "plenty of beds, Mister Fitzgerald. I've fourteen oyster-beds of my own." "You have!" said Dick, scratching his head; "clearly yours is the very cut of a plan, to have bed and supper so handy!"

However, bed or no bed, Dick went off with the merrow to the priest; but his reverence demurred. "Is it a fishy woman you'd marry?" "Please your reverence," said Dick, in an under tone, "she is as mild and as beautiful as the moon!" This argument had no effect; but at last Dick said, "She has all the gold in the sea for the asking." "Oh! that alters the case," said the priest, and so he at once made the merrow Mrs Fitzgerald. After this, Dick and his fishy wife lived very happily, and had two or three children; till one day, when Dick was from home, the merrow fell to cleaning the house, and found her little cohules dristh in a corner, where it had been hidden. She no sooner saw it, than she was seized with a longing to visit her relations. Down she went into the sea, intending to come back soon, but her people, seemingly, would not let her return. A sorry man was Dick Fitzgerald when he came home, and heard from the children what had happened. During his whole life afterwards, he still looked for her return, always blaming her father for keeping her. "Surely (said he) she would not leave her husband and children of herself." She never came back, however, although she had been so good a wife, that her memory is still preserved in the country, under the title of the "Lady of Gollerus."

The residue of this subject, an entertaining one we hope, must lie over to a future number.

SCOTTISH ANECDOTES.*

A PHYSICIAN'S APOLOGY.

A medical practitioner, not quite so celebrated as Galen, undertook to cure a person of deafness, with which he was sadly afflicted. One lotion after another had been prescribed, but still the patient was shut out from hearing from his fellow-man. "I've just come a'neir mair to ye, doctor," said his wife, "to see if ye can gie John something better, for the last bottle yo gied him did him nae gudd ava." "Dear me," said the doctor, "did it no! I'm surprised at that; but it matters little, for there's naething gaun worth the hearing just now."

NEIL GOW.

Neil Gow, the famed composer and performer on the violin, possessed a great share of mother-wit and readiness of retort, and was never the least put about in any company. Neil having borrowed some money from Mr Murray of Abercairney, Mr M. took a bet that he would for once put Neil to the blush; and just when a large party had assembled, and Neil had been placed at the head of his orchestra, Mr M. addressed the leader—"I say, Neil, are you not going to pay me that five pounds you owe me?" Neil very calmly exclaimed, "Eh! eh! eh! if ye had held your tongue, I would ha' been the last to speak o't."

THE HARD BARGAIN.

Of all the sons of canny Scotland, the cannier and most cautious are the inhabitants of Aberdeen. An Aberdonian, who had been to the south country with some cattle, had got as far as Perth on his way home. In passing through that city, his attention was attracted by some walking-sticks which he saw at a shop door. He went up and examined the whole parcel with great care. At last, finding one to his mind, he drew it out, and presenting it to the shopman, asked, "Weel, frien', fat'll ye be seeking for that bit thing, neh?" "Sixpence," was the reply. "Hoot awa', man, ye're sheerly jokin'; sixpence for a bit thing like that!—it's an auld reet; I'll gie ye twopenie for it." At this point in the bargain, an Englishman entered, drew out a stick from the very same parcel, asked the price and paid it, and turned away. "You see, now," said the shopman, "that sixpence is the real price of it, and that I was not overcharging you." "I see nae sic thing; I only see that a feel an' his money's soon parted, a thing I kent weel enough afore; but that's no to say that I'm gaun to pairt wi' mine the same way. I'll jeist gie ye twopenie for it, an' gien it waur for myself, I wadna gie aboon a bawbee, for I cud get as geed a yane ony day out'n a hedge at the road-side; but ye see I was wantin' to mak

a bit present to my maester, an' I thocht he wad think mair o't if I tellt him I had gotten it out'n a shop." "Well," said the merchant, "as you are going to make a present of it, I'll let you have it at prime cost, that's fourpence." "Na, na, naen o'er prime costs for me—I'm our auld for that; I ken brawly that prime cost's just ony thing ye like to ca'st; I wunna gie a bawbee mere nor the twopenie." The merchant then told him, that if that was the case, he was afraid they would not agree about it. "Fourpence! it's out'n a bounds! it's just an auld reet, no worth a bawbee." At last, in order to get rid of him, the shopkeeper offered to divide the difference, and to let him have it for thrupence. Our generous Aberdonian then drew out a long greasy leather purse, and extracted with considerable difficulty the sum of twopenie halfpenny, and laying it down on the counter, continued to cheapen. "He sheerly wadna east out wi' him about a bawbee." Seeing, however, that the merchant was beginning to get thoroughly wearied, he at last laid down the halfpenny, and then putting on one of his most winning looks, he said, "Weel, noo that we've got a' thing settled, ye'll sheerly come an' gie's a share o' a bottle o' yill." The shopkeeper excused himself, as he had none to leave behind him in the shop. The Aberdonian offered, if he would give him the "bawbees," to go and bring a bottle to the shop. This social proposal was, however, positively refused; and, seeing he could make no more of the shopkeeper, he threw his plaid over his shoulder, and, with the purchased eudge in his fist, took leave, observing, "Aweel, frien', gude day to ye; but gin I had kent that ye wadna ha' gien me a share o' the bit bottle o' yill, ye shudna ha' gotten a bawbee mair nor the twopenie."

AN ADULT.

"Mem," said a servant, dressing up the fire-place on a Sunday afternoon, "we had a young man, eighteen years of age, baptised in our church this afternoon." "Ay, had you, Jenny? that would be a very interesting sight to you: we had a young girl, fifteen years of age, lately in our church also; but these might be very worthy persons, Jenny, although they had not been baptised when young—possibly their parents were Baptists, or they themselves may have doubted the propriety of infant baptism." "Ah, na, mem," replied Jenny, "the young man couldna be that, for our minister said he was an adult."

ASOP ILLUSTRATED.

"I have come to ask a favour of you," said an old friend one day to the cautious Mr —: "I am a little put about for money just now, and I would take it kind if you would let me have your bill for a hundred pounds, for a short time." "I have no doubt of your taking it kind," returned the cool sarcastic man of business; "but I have made up my mind never to give my bill except for value received." "Indeed!" said the indignant applicant; "you seem to have forgot, sir, that when you were in distress, I gave you my bill for a similar sum, and though you have now got rich, you should not forget old friends." "I remember the circumstance you allude to, but really, my dear sir, if you thought me in distress, your doing the needful was no great proof of your wisdom; however, as I paid the bill, you had reason to be thankful that you were no sufferer, by doing what you now wish me to consider an obligation. In the mean time, in return for your favour," continued the good man, "I will give you a word of advice—read the fable of the Fox and the Crane; be thankful for your escape, and never again attempt to relieve a friend in distress with your bill."

A GOOD WISH.

An eccentric banker was eyeing with suspicious vision a bill presented to him for discount. "You need not fear," said the palpitating customer; "one of the parties keeps his carriage." "Ay!" rejoined the banker; "I shall be glad if he keep his feet."

HIGHLAND DISTINCTIONS.

"Have you had a goot sport to-day, air?" said the bellman to a gentleman with whom he was acquainted, returning from lashing the stream, with the basket slung over his back. "No, Archie, I can't say I have." "Ay, I am vex for that; but did you not catch nothing?" "Only a few small pars, and a tolerably fine grilse." "A grilse, did you? it's a ponny fish a grilse, teet is't; would you let me see it, sir? I like to see a grilse always." "Most certainly—there it is." "It's a ponny fish, and, as I'll guess from my eye, six pounds weight, a little more maybe if you were putting it on a weight to try; but I'll thocht you was knew better—it's no a grilse, it's a trout." "A trout, is it? how do you know?" "How I knew!—ken in a moment." "Yes, but how do you know?" "Weel, will you hearken till I was explain? You see, a grilse and a trout is of a perfect difference; it's not the same fish at all, and if you was seen a trout and a grilse just before you there, you would say tat fish is not the tother; but that's a trout, and tother is a grilse." "Yes, yes—you can say that, Archie; but in what way am I to distinguish between the two?" "Is it possible noo that you'll no understand! It's a trout, as I'm telling you aye, an' it's no a trout out o' the water down there, the Echeck beside oursels neither, but a Messon† trouts; teet is it."

"That's all very well; but tell me the colour, form, or point, that I may know again, and how you know that to be a Messon trout." "Knowt in a moment—mony a tog dee sin' Archie was a whalp: the burn doun gaun by, you see, is a bigger burn nor the Messon, and consequence the trouts are better made, thicker at the shouthers, more stronger to mak' their way through the water as I would say; and I'll just try again to explain. I will make you know the difference, plain as if you was a fish yourself, and put your nose to your brother fish, as you will see the kindly creatures in the water when they're meeting wi' them they ken; ay, more nor some of our brothers and sisters will do amang themselves, for all that's told them in the kirk; deet ay. I was going to explain to you the perfect difference that there is between a trout and a grilse. You see, if the two were laid down before you there this moment, you would observe, ay, before shust you would look again, and no body would need to tell you that they're not the same fish; you would say that a trout and a grilse would be here and there, if they happen to be put down, and you knew that's a trout; ay, a trout's not a bit of a grilse about it." "But, Archie, I am just as wise as I was; you have yet given me no idea whatever of the points in which the trout and grilse differ from each other." "After that, now, it's a perfect astonishment to me that you'll not understand what I'll made as plain as the shild's A B C to the school laddie. What I'll say in a word to made you ken, I don't know! You see—for I want you to know, for it's importance to a gentleman like you that's often fish—a grilse and trout belong to a different family, and their father nor mother is not the same, and their offspring canna be the same, but shust resemble their father and mother like ourselves—a perfect, altogether difference, never possible to be mistake by any body that will knew a trout; you see, I say again, there noo, that's a trout lying down, you'll say in a moment when you'll saw, well that's a trout, and you'll knew it; because it's there, and though they just be awa' from one another, not far, you'll shust say yourself they're not the same fish at all. Now you are satisfied that it's no possible to be the same, because they are, as I'm saying as perfect plain, not the same; if you'll not understand now, you are a stupid more nor I'll thocht, and I canna put words into your head."

MUTABILITY.

[BY SHELLEY.]
The flower that smiles to-day
To-morrow dies;
All that we wish to stay,
Tempts and then flies.
What is this world's delight?
Lightning that mocks the night,
Brief even as bright!

Virtue, how frail it is!
Friendship too rare!
Love, how it sells poor bliss
For proud despair!
But we, though soon they fall,
Survive their joy and all
Which ours we call.

Whilst skies are blue and bright,
Whilst flowers are gay,
Whilst eyes that change ere night
Make glad the day;
Whilst yet the calm hours creep,
Dream thou—and from thy sleep
Then wake to weep.

MUSIC AS A BRANCH OF POPULAR EDUCATION.

We have more than once had occasion to advert to the experiments lately so successfully made, to give a musical education to the populace in France. We find in a French journal a statement and *résumé* which has been made of the influence exercised by this new educational system under the direction of M. Wilhem; and the results (summarily expressed as "six thousand children and twelve hundred adults already initiated, to the great benefit of public order and morality, and a great impulse given to the art itself") are sufficiently remarkable to deserve that we should transfer the statement of them to our columns. It was only in March 1835 that the municipal council decided on the introduction of elementary singing into the system of instruction followed in all the communal schools of Paris—after the method and under the inspection of M. Wilhem. In 1839, the Minister of Public Instruction extended the same measure to the royal colleges. At the present moment, elementary singing is taught in seventy children's schools, containing from six to seven thousand pupils, and fourteen schools of adults, with from fifteen to eighteen hundred scholars—and in nearly all the royal colleges. At the Halle aux Draps, about five hundred workmen assemble; and the ardour, zeal, and proficiency of these men are the subject of daily astonishment. The cavalry school of Saumur has likewise adopted the Wilhem method—which has, besides, its adepts and propagators in the principal towns of France. Each winter, the monitors and select pupils of the various schools, to the number of five or six hundred, meet, under the direction of M. Wilhem, either at the Hotel de Ville or in the Great Hall of the Sorbonne, and execute, without accompaniment, compositions taken from the works of the greatest masters. Fragments of Gluck, Handel, Cherubini, Méhul, Sacchini, and Gossec, are rendered, by these imposing masses, with a truth of intonation and rhythmical precision, to which, it is said, there is nothing comparable in France.—*Athenaeum*.

* From the "Laird of Logan," a work publishing in parts, by Messrs Blackie and Son, Glasgow, and chiefly consisting of jokes and anecdotes popular in the west of Scotland.

† The stream of the Echeck issues from the loch from which it takes its name, and discharges its waters into the Holy Loch opposite Kilmun.

† Glen Messon, in Argyllshire, behind Dunoon.

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